

Listing and Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace the claims that were published in the PCT Application and annexed to the International Preliminary Examination Report:

1. (currently amended) A method for organizing e-mail messages comprising the steps of:

indicating ~~(101)~~ at least one first e-mail message in a user mailbox;

associating ~~(121)~~ the at least one first e-mail with a second e-mail by user-enablement of an association option; and

forming ~~(125)~~ an associated group in the user mailbox comprising at least two or more associated e-mails.

2. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of associating further comprises the steps of:

enabling ~~(123)~~ an options list to appear with respect to the at least one first e-mail message;

selecting ~~(123)~~ an associate option on the options list; and

indicating ~~(125)~~ the second e-mail; wherein the second e-mail is caused to be automatically associated to the at least one first e-mail to form the associated group.

3. (currently amended) The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of providing a show associations ~~(305)~~ and a hide associations option ~~(307)~~ on the options list.

4. (currently amended) The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of showing ~~(309)~~ the associated e-mails of a sent e-mail message to a recipient when the show associations option is selected.

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 3, further comprising the step of hiding ~~(309)~~ the associated e-mails of a sent e-mail message from a recipient when the hide associations option is selected.

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a collapsability and expandability feature ~~(219, 213)~~ for the associated group.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of providing a first graphical indicator ~~(221, 215)~~ for indicating when the associated group is expanded and a second graphical indicator for indicating when the associated group is collapsed.

8. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of providing e-mail operations for performing on the associated group of e-mails ~~(119, 129)~~.

9. (currently amended) A method for organizing e-mail messages comprising the steps of:

creating a user-defined discussion topic heading ~~(107)~~, said discussion topic heading appearing as an entry in at least one of the user's mailboxes; and

associating at least one e-mail message to the user-created discussion topic via user-enablement of an association option to form an associated e-mail-to-topic group ~~(111)~~.

10. (currently amended) The method of claim 9, wherein the step of associating further comprises the steps of:

enabling ~~(123)~~ an options list to appear with respect to the user-defined discussion topic heading;

selecting ~~(123)~~ an associate option on the options list; and

indicating ~~(125)~~ at least one e-mail message; wherein the at least one e-mail is caused to be automatically associated to the discussion topic heading to form the associated e-mail-to-topic group.

11. (currently amended) The method of claim 10, further comprising the step of providing a show associations ~~(305)~~ and a hide associations option ~~(307)~~ on the options list.

12. (currently amended) The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of showing at least one of the discussion topic heading and associated e-mails of a sent e-mail message to a recipient when the show associations option is selected ~~(305)~~.

13. (currently amended) The method of claim 11, further comprising the step of hiding at least one of the discussion topic heading and associated e-mails of a sent e-mail message to a recipient when the hide associations option is selected ~~(307)~~.

14. (currently amended) The method of claim 9, further comprising the step of providing a collapsability and expandability feature ~~(213, 219)~~ for the associated e-mail-to-topic group.

15. (currently amended) An e-mail system comprising:
e-mail software for providing e-mail capabilities to a user ~~(101)~~; and
an associate feature ~~(109, 123)~~ for providing interactive e-mail organization capabilities to the user by organizing e-mail messages according to user input to form at least one of an associated group of e-mails or an associated e-mail-to-topic group in at least one of the user's mailboxes.

16. (currently amended) The system of claim 15, further comprising an options list with respect to each e-mail message, said options list comprising said associate feature ~~(109, 123)~~.

17. (currently amended) he system of claim 16, wherein the associated group of e-mails is formed by causing the options list to appear with respect to at least one first e-mail message ~~(123)~~, selecting the associate feature from said options list ~~(123)~~, and indicating a second e-mail ~~(125)~~, wherein the second e-mail is caused to be automatically associated to the at least one first e-mail to form the associated group of e-mails.

18. (currently amended) The system of claim 16, wherein the associated e-mail-to-topic group is formed by creating a user-defined discussion topic heading ~~(107)~~, causing the options list to appear with respect to at least one e-mail message, selecting the associate feature from said options list ~~(109)~~, and indicating the discussion topic heading ~~(111)~~, wherein the at least one e-mail is caused to be automatically associated to the discussion topic to form the associated e-mail-to-topic group and said discussion topic heading appears as an additional field in said at least one e-mail message.

19. (currently amended) The system of claim 16, further comprising a show associations feature ~~(305)~~ and a hide associations feature ~~(307)~~ on the options list.

20. (currently amended) The system of claim 15, further comprising an auto-process feature ~~(400)~~ for automatically parsing a received e-mail to search for an existing discussion thread, wherein if an existing discussion thread is found, the received e-mail is automatically associated to the discussion thread.